

MARVEL | 002

PARENTAL
ADVISORY!
NOT FOR KIDS!

GEORGE A. ROMERO™
EMPIRE OF THE DEAD

ILLUSTRATED BY
ALEX MALEEV



Welcome to

New York

THE EMPIRE ~~STATE~~



PAUL
BARNUM



MAYOR
CHANDRAKE



PENNY
JONES



XAVIER



BILL
CHANDRAKE

OF THE DEAD

FIVE YEARS AFTER THE DEAD FIRST WALKED, NEW YORK CITY HAS BECOME A FORTRESS OF ISOLATION AGAINST THE UNDEAD PLAGUE. THE MILITARISTIC FORCES OF MAYOR CHANDRAKE KEEP THE STREETS RELATIVELY SAFE AND THE SURVIVORS ENJOY GLADIATORIAL GAMES IN WHICH CAPTURED ZOMBIES FIGHT FOR FOOD. PENNY JONES, A MEDICAL SCIENTIST, TEAMS UP WITH A SKEPTICAL ZOMBIE WRANGLER NAMED PAUL BARNUM TO FIND A WAY TO TAME THE UNDEAD. BUT ZOMBIES AREN'T THE ONLY MONSTROUS THREAT TO NYC. XAVIER, A ZOMBIE WHO RETAINS A MODICUM OF INTELLIGENCE, SPIES THE MAYOR'S NEPHEW BILL IN THE SUBWAY DRAINING THE BLOOD OF A WOMAN FROM TWO HOLES IN HER NECK...

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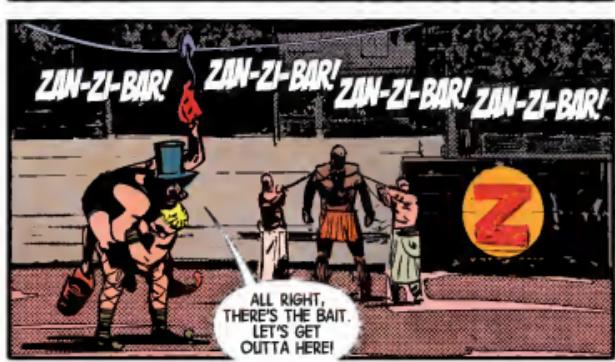
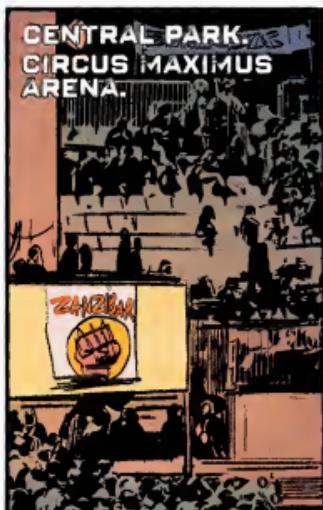
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CENTRAL PARK
CIRCUS MAXIMUS
ARENA.







CENTRAL PARK
POLICE PRECINCT

YOU
WAITED. ALL
THIS TIME.

PAUL BARNUM,
MANAGER OF THE ARENA

YOU
OWE ME
A RIDE HOME.

PENNY JONES,
PEDIATRICIAN.

I PREFER TO
THINK YOU
WERE WORRIED
ABOUT ME.

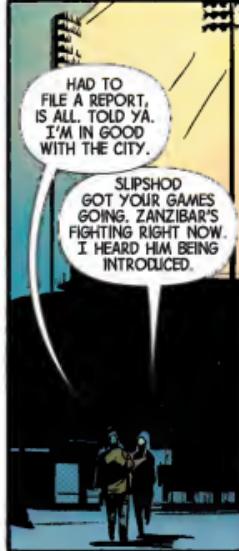
MMMM...
THAT,
TOO.

HAD TO
FILE A REPORT,
IS ALL TOLD YA.
I'M IN GOOD
WITH THE CITY.

SLIPSHOP
GOT YOUR GAMES
GOING. ZANZIBAR'S
FIGHTING RIGHT NOW.
I HEARD HIM BEING
INTRODUCED.

HE MUST
HAVE WON, OR
MAYBE HE LOST.
CROWD DOESN'T
REALLY CARE
WHICH WAY IT
GOES.

STOP!





XAVIER. THIS IS THE ONE I
TOLD YOU ABOUT. THE ONE
WHO WENT MISSING
DOWNTOWN.

I TOLD
YOU I SAW
A SWAT
OFFICER.

CAN I HAVE
WE MADE A DEAL,
HER? REMEMBER?
WHAT?

YES, BUT, I
CAN'T JUST...
I MEAN...I'LL
HAVE TO GET
PERMISSION.

YOU MEAN FROM
THE MAYOR? HE
SEEMS TO LIKE ME.
I'M SURE HE'LL
APPROVE.

OH, I'M SURE HE
WILL ONLY...YOU
NEVER KNOW WHAT
ELSE MIGHT BE
INVOLVED.

WHEN
CHANDRAK
LIKES
YOU, SOMETIMES THERE
ARE...UNEXPECTED
COMPLICATIONS.

LET ME
WORRY ABOUT
THAT.

OKAY, YOU
WANT THIS
STINKER... I'LL
GIVE IT A
SHOT.

I'M GONNA
WHIP YOU INTO
SHAPE, MISSY...

...TEACH
YOU SOME
MANERS.

TEACH ME NO,
KVBDS WHIP ME?
XFGP NO, THSRE
I WHIP YOU!

BENEATH THE ARENA.

ANYONE WHO STEALS FROM THE CIRCUS IS STEALING FROM THE MAYOR. HE TAKES A SPECIAL INTEREST IN SUCH CASES. THIS PRISONER COMES WITH US.

ER... MAY I HAVE YOUR NAME, PLEASE?



THE DAKOTA.

MAYOR CHANDRAKE IS EXPECTING ME, JONES. PENNY.



HE'S IN THE GYMNASIUM. SUB-LEVEL TWO.







A FEMALE, ONCE A SWAT OFFICER. SHE SEEMS TO STILL HAVE AN INSTINCT FOR THE JOB. SHE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR CAPTURING A THIEF AT THE ARENA LAST NIGHT.





THE DAKOTA.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,
AS YOU ALL KNOW, WE HAVE
A SERIOUS PROBLEM. ONE
WHICH THREATENS OUR
VERY EXISTENCE.

I'M SPEAKING
ABOUT OUR ALIEN
POPULATION. I CALL THEM
"ALIENS" BECAUSE THEY ARE
NOT US! I WILL DO MY
BEST TO ERADICATE
THEM ALL!

LOWER EAST SIDE.

I AM
DEDICATED TO
THE SURVIVAL
OF THE SOCIETY
IT HAS TAKEN US
SO LONG TO
CONSTRUCT.

AND I
SINCERELY HOPE
THAT, WHEN THE TIME
COMES TO CAST YOUR
VOTES, YOU WILL HELP
REELECT ME AS
MAYOR OF THIS...THE
GREATEST CITY IN
THE WORLD.





LISTEN. FOR
EVERY BEEF YOU
HAVE AGAINST CHANDRAKE,
I'VE GOT A DOZEN OF
'EM. BUT I'M LIVIN' GOOD.
YOU'RE LIVIN' GOOD.
LOTTA FOLKS OUT THERE
CAN'T SAY THE
SAME. SO MY ADVICE
TO YOU IS...





LATER.

I HAVE AN APPETITE.

YOU
ALWAYS HAVE
AN APPETITE.

SORRY, DARLING.
I'M EXHAUSTED.
AND I...HAVEN'T
EATEN. I'D NEVER
BE ABLE TO SATISFY
YOU. I'VE SENT
FOR THE PRISONER.

DON'T BE AFRAID.
MY LADIES WILL BE
MERCIFUL.
M-MERCIFUL?

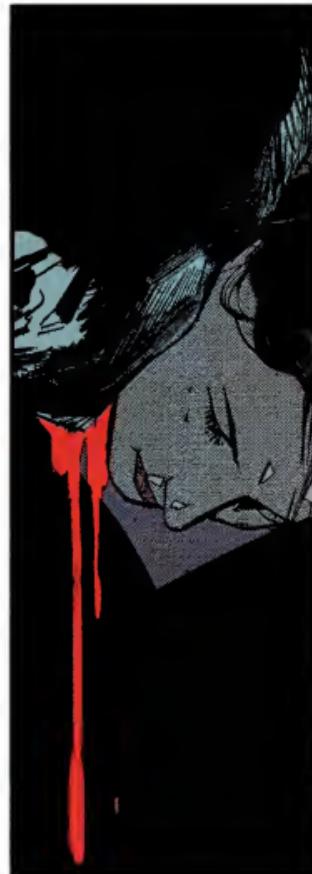
YES, THEY
WON'T ALL GO
AFTER YOU TOGETHER.
THEY'LL DO IT ONE AT
A TIME. IT SHOULD
HAVE THE EFFECT OF
PROLONGING YOUR
PLEASURE.

P-PLEASURE?

INDEED.
FOR BOTH YOU AND
FOR THEM, MY LADIES
ARE WELL EDUCATED IN
THE ARTS OF...CARNAL
GRATIFICATION.









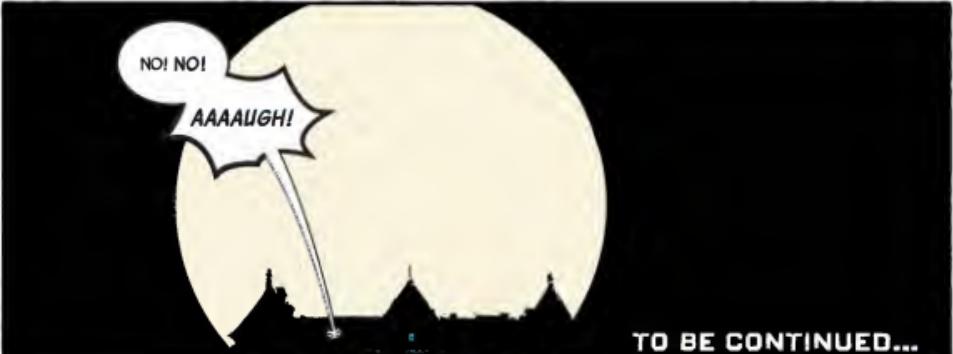
THIS...THIS IS...
REALLY SOMETHIN'
YOU DON'T GET
THIS EVERY DAY.



IF YOU WANT
IT...YOU CAN HAVE IT.
ANY TIME. THERE ARE
HUNDREDS OF US OUT HERE.
HUNDREDS WHO CAN GIVE
YOU...FEELINGS...THAT
YOU'VE NEVER FELT
BEFORE.



MMMM,
YEEEEEAH...
YEAHH...



NO! NO!

AAAUAUGH!

TO BE CONTINUED...

UNDEAD LETTERS

I FIRST SAW **NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD** SHAMEFULLY LATE FOR A HORROR GEEK. I'D BEEN AFRAID OF IT, YOU SEE. IT'S GOT A REPUTATION. ONE OF THE SCARIEST MOVIES EVER MADE! STRANGE AND VISCERAL! A HIGH WATERMARK FOR HORROR! FINALLY, I DECIDED TO BUCKLE DOWN AND TAKE THE PLUNGE. WHEN THE MOVIE FINISHED I SAT ALONE THINKING, "THAT'S WHAT EVERYONE GOES CRAZY OVER?" IT WASN'T AS GORY AS **EVIL DEAD 2**, AS UNRELENTINGLY TENSE AS **THE SHINING**, AS ETHEREALLY HAUNTING AS **THE INNOCENTS**... I SHRUGGED AND FIGURED MAYBE I JUST DIDN'T GET IT.

I DIDN'T. BUT THEN I DID. BECAUSE **NOTLD** WORKS, OR AT LEAST WORKED ON ME, MUCH LIKE THE UNDEAD IN THE FILM ITSELF. IT COMES ON SHAMBLY AND ODD, BUT SEEMINGLY BENIGN. IT BEGINS IN A PURPOSEFULLY HAMMY PASTICHE OF '50S SCI-FI HORROR, WITH OUR VERY RETRO JOHNNY AND BARBARA. THE FIRST ATTACK SEEKS TO SUCCEED ONLY BY SURPRISE AND BARBARA'S PROPENSITY FOR HYSTERICS. IT'S EASY TO THINK "WELL, COME ON, I COULD SURVIVE THAT."

THEN, SLOWLY BUT SURELY, IT OVERWELMS YOU. THE FARMHOUSE. THE REFUGEES. BEN AND HIS IDEALS OF DOOMED PRACTICALITY AND ALTRUISM. THAT SHAMBLY NATURE OF EARLIER SCENES TURNS SINISTER AND HORRIFYING. WHEN BEN THROWS THAT FLAMING CHAIR OUT ONTO THE PORCH, IT LOOKS LIKE THAT WHOLE DAMN PLACE MIGHT CATCH ON FIRE. AND THE NUMBERS OF THE UNDEAD JUST KEEP GROWING...

AND THEN, FINALLY, IT SINKS ITS TEETH INTO YOU, AND YOU'RE DONE. FOR DAYS AFTER I COULDN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT IT. BARBARA, WHO SHOULD BE OUR STRONG FEMALE PROTAGONIST, SUCCUMBS TO NUMBING SHOCK, ONLY TO GET PULLED INTO THE UNDEAD MASSES BY HER OWN BROTHER JUST WHEN SHE SPRINGS INTO ACTION. THAT'S NOT SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN! THEN THERE'S HARRY, SELFISH AND SCARED. BUT WHO WOULDN'T BE? AND DIDN'T THE BASEMENT END UP

BEING THE SAFEST PLACE AFTER ALL? AND HIS WIFE, WITH THE DAUGHTER? OOF. AND BEN. POOR, POOR BEN.

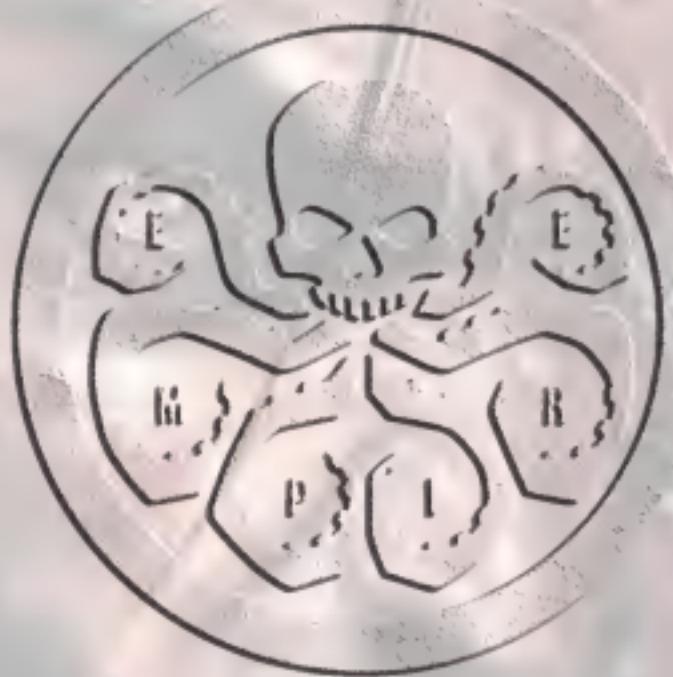
SO I WATCHED THE MOVIE AGAIN. AND THEN AGAIN. AND THEN AGAIN. AND I WATCHED **DAWN AND DAY**. I SAW **LAND, DIARY, SURVIVAL**. I BECAME A FULL-FLEDGED UNDEADHEAD. WHEN I INHERITED A DIGITAL PROJECTOR FROM A FRIEND OF MINE, **NOTLD** WAS THE FIRST MOVIE I PUT IN.

AND NOW HE'S BACK. TO SEE A NEW ROMERO STORY TAKING FORM IS THE THRILL OF A LIFETIME. AND TO BRING IN VAMPIRES? I KNOW ROMERO'S THE GODFATHER OF ZOMBIES, BUT HAVE YOU SEEN **MARTIN**? IF NOT, CORRECT THAT. IT'S ONE OF MY ALL-TIME FAVORITE VAMPIRE MOVIES (AND INCLUDES A CAMEO BY ROMERO HIMSELF! AS A PRIEST). AND IN ROMERO'S TRUE ICONOCLAST STYLE, AT A TIME WHEN TV AND FILM ARE INUNDATED WITH HORRIFIC ZOMBIES AND ROMANTIC VAMPIRES, THIS BOOK DELIVERS SYMPATHETIC UNDEAD AND VAMPIRES UNAPOLOGETICALLY HUNGRY FOR BLOOD. BECAUSE ROMERO'S GOING TO TELL HIS STORY HIS WAY, AND IF YOU'RE A FAN LIKE I AM, THAT IS HOWLING, SCREAMING, HORRIFYING MUSIC TO YOUR EARS.

GET EXCITED. STAY WEIRD. AIM FOR THE HEAD OR THE HEART, DEPENDING ON THE TEETH.

-JAKE T.





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